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ABSTRACT

This booklet is the report of a task force appointed by the National Association of Secondary School Principals to examine the contemporary American social scene and the place of secondary education within that context. The report focuses mainly on the educational program of secondary schools, rather than attempting to survey all aspects of secondary education. Throughout the report, a variety of recommendations and proposals are presented to aid school administrators in improving the educational program of their schools. Although the task force considered a number of relevant publications in the course of its work, the report is based primarily on the experience of the task force members. Each member is, or has been, a secondary school administrator. (Author/JG)

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Secondary Schools in a Changing Society

This We Believe

A Statement on Secondary Education
Prepared by
The Task Force on Secondary Schools
in a Changing Society
of
The National Association of
Secondary School Principals

EA 007 275

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Foreword

The Board of Directors of NASSP, sensing the need for a definitive statement on secondary education by practicing school administrators, appointed in June 1974 a Task Force of seven members to prepare a report on "This We Believe."

Once commissioned, Task Force members used the lens of experience as the primary instrument with which to examine the nature of modern youth, the contemporary social scene, and the place of secondary education within that scene. While the Task Force read extensively and discussed thoroughly a number of publications concerning secondary education and youth, the basic frame of reference used to formulate the report was that of reflective experience. Each member is serving, or has served, as a secondary school administrator.

The report focuses upon the educational program of the secondary school. The NASSP preferred to emphasize in some depth this central dimension of schools rather than to develop a broad survey of all aspects of secondary education.

The Board of Directors of NASSP accepts and endorses the *This We Believe* statement and expresses its appreciation to the Task Force for an exceedingly difficult job performed with high quality.

The report is written with the intent that the proposals be practical and workable. It provides a framework for action for all principals and their communities who seriously wish to improve their schools and by so doing to enhance the opportunities of youth to grow beneficially toward adulthood.

Owen B. Kiernan
Executive Secretary

Introduction

Secondary schools reflect more than do most institutions the forces of change in society. Thus have the schools become modified decade upon decade by the flow of American life.

As Americans pass through yet another significant era, public attention turns once again to secondary education. What is its purpose? How should it function? Who are the appropriate participants? What constitutes a relevant curriculum and methodology? What revisions must be made? Clearly, secondary schools once again face the cyclops eye of time.

Aside from a certain durability now exceeding one hundred years, perhaps the most characteristic trait of the American secondary school has been its adaptability. As society has moved through the decades, the schools have adjusted to new demands. Consequently, secondary education has been transformed not once but many times in this nation. Typically these changes were evolutionary rather than sudden and dramatic because they reflected developments in the broader society, also evolutionary.

From its roots in the academy, to an emphasis upon the agricultural and mechanical, to a partnership with the growing state universities, to the era of Progressive Education, to the Sputnik focus upon academics, to the tumult of the Sixties and the searchings of the Seventies, the secondary schools have kept moving with society.

Throughout this continual transformation, however, the goals of secondary education have remained extraordinarily stable. Even as new routes to learning were charted and recharted, the central purpose remained essentially fixed. The aim was to develop the talent of each student which in turn would contribute to the general welfare. The democratic ideal that the individual and society would find fulfillment in one another was consistently pursued. The weaving together of personal needs with the public good gained top priority regardless of the decade or of the particular means employed to attain that emphasis.

For this same one hundred years Americans have exhibited a commitment to the schooling of youth greater than any other people on earth. Education is the American Ethos. Whatever the need, education was proposed as the cure. Education was to keep government reasonably responsive through an enlightened electorate. It was to provide the means to conquer hunger and disease. It was to harness natural forces, stimulate the arts, raise the public taste, create a common culture, provide economic opportunity, and discover new horizons for mankind. And, to a considerable extent, education delivered on these promises. Consensually the general welfare was benefited by this expression of faith.

The challenge for the secondary schools of today is to be equally alert and beneficial. As the dynamics of contemporary change unfold, educators must recognize their significance to the education of youth. Current school programs need to be reviewed and recast in the light of these new and general circumstances. Then secondary schools must plan with imagination and wisdom for the education and transition of youth during this decade and beyond.

The Changing Society

The clear social trend of recent years has been for increased individual choice and personal freedom. Among the forces fueling this movement are these: (1) a broadened legal interpretation of constitutional rights, (2) a strong thrust for equality of sex and race, (3) a growing affluence which released economic constraints upon choice, (4) rearing practices which focused upon the needs and demands of the growing child, (5) an erosion of family stability, (6) an increased allegiance to individual options as against social obligations, (7) a public mood to experiment, to replace tradition and social custom with personal lifestyle.

This thrust for personalism and egalitarianism in society has come amidst a broad acceleration of events. The central factor of contemporary life, perhaps, has become constant change. Movement, rather than stability, typifies the world that youth knows. Today's new development tends to dissolve with tomorrow. It was only a short step from the heady futurism of the moon shot program in the 1960s to a sobering reality about the ecological and mineralogical limitations of Planet Earth in the 1970s. Similarly, yesterday's hunger has been replaced by today's plenty only to be shadowed in turn by the specter of even greater famine tomorrow.

Accelerated circumstances such as these tend to give life a transient quality. Youth, recognizing this transience, seek assistance to decipher the meaning of things. While secondary schools maintain a proven curriculum, they also aim to provide students with new capabilities to sort out novel events in times of relentless change. Although schools should not change for the sake of change, they should change as conditions change. Schools, to be effective, must balance verified practice with innovative ideas. By thoughtful adaptation to contemporary social forces and by employing appropriate professional knowledge, secondary schools can provide

students with the skills and knowledge to live fully and to contribute, in turn, to the flow of civilization.

Because response to change causes restructuring, the secondary schools of the Seventies are substantially different from their counterparts of the Fifties. In many areas—curriculum, organization, evaluation, student participation, personnel management, and public involvement—the American secondary school is appreciably remodeled. Elective courses continue to be added or dropped according to student interests. Graduation requirements are revised. Students and faculty assume new roles and responsibilities. Instruction becomes more flexible. Options for students are increased and alternatives provided. Resources for learning are expanded year by year. The transition continues.

Because youth in America tend to be precursors of change and because by nature youth often seek new adventures, secondary schools reflect a degree of flexibility not required of most other institutions. Whether it be a new trend in social manners or in public priorities, the schools are among the first to feel the effect. While such vigor transfuses education, it can also magnify the effort required to maintain schools as coherent institutions.

Managing the double dimension of change, that of society generally and of youth within society, requires skill and patience. The difference between whimsy and substance can be lost to the excitement of the hour. Maintaining a delicate balance between spontaneity and structure as well as between invention and tradition is the aim of the working school. The more artistic schools achieve this balance; they educate with perspective.

While change accelerates, broad social allegiances appear to be diminishing in contemporary society. People seem inclined today to pursue personal interests and to identify with smaller groups rather than to seek a mass identity. In a culture that is both pluralistic and individualistic, as exists today in the United States, the core of common customs tends to be expressed in relatively few places. One of the more prominent institutions to which all Americans look in such times is the secondary school. Here they seek some common values.

Schools carry a particular responsibility to identify and express the central norms of society under these circumstances. As youth move from childhood into adulthood, their outlook becomes increasingly significant to the total populace. Habits and attitudes

casually accepted in children suddenly gain impact when expressed by older youth. The secondary school serves the age group where contending viewpoints result in serious conflict unless tolerance and mutual respect are developed among students. An understanding and appreciation among youth of cultural and social differences as worked out on the common ground of the secondary school is a service of unique value to society.

The schools also can focus upon such transcendent values as always remain in any society. Perhaps few in number, these common commitments are those to which a people generally subscribe regardless of subgroup allegiances. Among these values are support for constitutional processes, freedom of religion, exercise of the voting franchise, and the right to choose an occupation. Common bonds such as these provide the cement essential to keep an otherwise plural people together.

The "Purpose" Problem

Secondary education reflects the priorities of the public. As the electorate feels the need to achieve broad objectives, the schools are asked to reshape the curriculum toward accomplishing those objectives. Serving as the threshold to adulthood, secondary schools are considered as central to achieving the goal at hand. The manpower requirements, as well as the public commitment, are reflected in the secondary school program. As the secondary school is directed, so moves the nation.

The nation has outlined some clear priorities for secondary schools over the years. The schools, in turn, have responded with programs. When the land needed proficient farmers and mechanics, the secondary schools developed departments of agriculture and industrial arts. When society desired to make secondary education broadly available, the enrollment of adolescents aged 14 to 17 in high school was raised dramatically, from 51 percent in 1930 to 76 percent in 1950 to 93 percent in 1970. Concern for automobile safety created driver education programs. A new public appreciation of aesthetics resulted in departments of music and art. The desire of citizens to help the handicapped caused the growth of special education. Significant new leisure time led to the development of large-scale student activities programs. The scare of Sputnik led to rigor in mathematics and science. New court opinions about the constitutional rights of minors caused a relaxing of control over student expression. A need for career awareness and for practical learning experiences led to a vast growth in work-study and service-learning programs. With few exceptions the public view has prevailed in the operation of secondary schools.

Schools can be effective when goals are clear. The high schools of America can graduate one million welders, or two million French linguists, or three million trombonists, or whatever,

depending upon what society says it must have in the way of human skills and knowledge. Given sufficient lead time, secondary school personnel are content proficient. They also are extraordinarily flexible. Teachers can revamp physics or mathematics instruction with little more than a summer institute. They can develop new courses in ethnic affairs or planetary geography. They can teach Latin or Mandarin Chinese, woodshop or computer technology, according to the demands of the times.

When goals are not clear, however, the task becomes more difficult. A mobile, pluralistic society tends to place temporary and divergent demands upon its educational institutions. Herein lies the nub of the problem faced by the contemporary secondary school. The conflicting desires and values of a highly personalistic, pluralistic larger society press upon secondary schools. A variety of expectations explodes. Pressures build to move in one direction, then another as counteracting forces grow. The requests multiply. The pace quickens. Then schools, in response, are forced to focus upon immediate issues rather than upon more substantive matters.

The burden of responding to a broad spectrum of transient demands can exhaust the secondary school. An element of instability and dissatisfaction may appear under these conditions. While many schools can survive under circumstances of multitudinous pressure, such situations generally are counterproductive. Developing a new approach to the entire situation, then, becomes an appealing alternative.

The NASSP believes that a new emphasis must be placed upon the consensual function of secondary schools. Schools need to assume the leadership for gaining a certain public agreement about the purpose of secondary education. The many viewpoints expressed about the objectives and priorities of secondary education must be blended in each community to provide common ground for school action. This consensual function of schools is of growing and extraordinary significance in these contemporary times of pluralism. Developing a sense of commonality with the public about education is critical to the success of the secondary schools. With school personnel as catalyst, the community must work at this task vigorously.

Gaining agreement on educational goals and objectives is no simple task. The question is fundamentally political, one of public

outlook not of professional opinion. Aristotle, for instance, commented about educational objectives in *Politics* and not when writing about pedagogy. His observations are surprisingly contemporary:

> It is clear then that there should be legislation about education and that it should be conducted on a public system. But consideration must be given to the question, what constitutes education and what is the proper way to be educated? At present there are differences of opinion as to the proper tasks to be set; for all peoples do not agree as to the things that the young ought to learn, either with a view to virtue or with a view to the best life, nor is it clear whether their studies should be regulated more with regard to intellect or with regard to character.

The American public is neglecting this political task. Public opinion about secondary education lacks explicitness, leaving secondary schools awash in a sea of anomie. The "purpose" problem, then, becomes the baseline issue to be resolved. A sense of consistent direction urgently is needed.

What of the public purpose? The central problem facing secondary schools that attempt to organize and define public intent for secondary education is that the values and priorities of a highly personalistic, divergent society often conflict. Still, a pursuit of common ground must be mounted.

A useful statement of educational goals may be obtained from a number of sources. Declarations are available from each of the 50 states and from hundreds of local school districts. The Association views the broad statement of goals developed in 1973 by the National Commission on the Reform of Secondary Education as valuable guidelines. Earlier general statements of exceptional worth are those of the Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education (1918) and the Educational Policies Commission (1938).

But a listing of comprehensive goals provides only a starting point. For any statement to become operational, a considerable degree of specificity is required. A functioning school must probe beyond general themes toward definitions of purpose and of priority that are sufficiently explicit to be acted upon.

A certain consensus and direction can be achieved with appropriate leadership from the school. While it may seem incongruous for schools to initiate a broad effort to determine public

intent while at the same time following this intent, contemporary circumstances require this dual role. As in past decades, changing times dictate changing priorities.

The Association believes that secondary school administrators should assume the leadership necessary to move the public mind toward definitive statements about the purpose of secondary education in each community. While educators are expected to participate in discussion and debate during the process of identifying objectives and priorities, the central commitment must be to the demanding task of determining public purpose and reflecting this purpose in school policy. School personnel are responsible for maintaining an honest interpretation of that expressed public viewpoint.

The Association feels that public service agencies, including the public schools, should not assume the elitist position of determining, apart from a public mandate, what is best for the public. The electorate, the legislatures, and the courts determine such matters for society. Schools are instruments of social reconstruction only as directed by the larger public body.

The individual school, as well as the local school district, must move ahead with the task of defining purpose. The building administrator carries a direct responsibility for acting in concert with the immediate community, faculty, and students to develop a set of objectives and priorities appropriate to the local school setting. The completion of this task is basic to the successful operation of a secondary school in today's world.

Community participation should be refocused so that the larger issues of purpose and of priority replace that public attention currently devoted to specific and individual problems, and to immediate crises. The lack of a coherent larger direction is a central cause of these problems and crises. With no strong consensual framework, anxieties arise among parents and students, resulting in unnecessary friction and inefficient use of school personnel.

Determining with the community the major directions to pursue may be an unfamiliar role for educational leaders, but this determination provides a commission for action. Without this commission the leadership of the school administrator can dissipate and become ineffective.

Some school personnel may feel unprepared to assume the responsibility of organizing community opinion to define goals and priorities for education. In such instances pre-service and inservice programs which provide school administrators with these community leadership skills should be developed at the earliest opportunity. Among the elements of such programs is a knowledge about community structure and about ways to focus and define public opinion.

One complexity of the "purpose" problem concerns new responsibilities assumed by secondary schools in recent years, causing a growth of services to youth and parent alike. These new responsibilities most often arose from the emotional or psychological needs of youth. They reflect the social and emotional circumstances of the larger society, particularly the weakening of family influence and the impact of psychological stress in modern life. As increased numbers of students with serious problems appeared at the school doorstep, remedial and supplementary programs grew to accommodate the situation. The secondary school found itself diverting resources toward the rehabilitation of students and away from the instruction of students.

By this process of accretion, secondary schools have become overburdened. By attempting to revive as well as to counsel and teach, the schools now are finding their resources insufficient to total demand. Schools, of course, are only one of several youth-serving institutions in most communities. But secondary schools increasingly are expected to rehabilitate adolescents with severe problems. Whether attempting to lower juvenile crime, to repair family disintegration, to reconstruct alienated adolescents, or to find jobs for the marginally employable, schools generally are the linchpin of the local effort.

A close look at this proliferation of responsibilities, and careful thought about the capabilities of the secondary school to serve realistically every youth under any and all circumstances, must be among the central priorities of local community groups formed to determine objectives. While the Association considers it imperative that restorative services be available to youth as needed, the role of the school in the more serious cases is to guide students to the appropriate rehabilitative service in the community rather

than to provide this service within the school setting. The community should explore alternatives to present arrangements from the standpoint of cost and effectiveness.

The Association believes the expectation that schools would provide a major program of therapeutic and rehabilitative services for youth grew casually and without careful thought, and that serious questions must be raised about the impact of such an effort upon the resources available for instruction as well as upon the safety and welfare of the student body generally.

NASSP is equally convinced that society should assume the responsibility of caring for youth who need care. The appropriate organizations for rehabilitative care are the youth and family service agencies in the community. A major problem in the delivery of restorative services to youth is the lack of cohesive, full-service programs. Coordination of responsibilities among the youth and family service agencies needs to be improved. Respective functions should be clarified and relationships firmed. Central responsibilities need to be tied down.

The Association believes that secondary schools should assume the function of coordinating community youth and family service agencies so that student referrals will be timely, appropriate, and articulated with the school environment. Schools should help identify the need for services, locate services, and interrelate services as required by youth. The delivery of rehabilitative services, however, should be by youth-serving agencies in the community whose central mission is rehabilitation rather than education.

Another characteristic of secondary education in more modern times is its focus upon the individual person as the *sine qua non* of all instruction. Self-realization, the development of personal talent and interest, has become the overriding focus of the educational program. Schools have centered their curricular efforts upon serving the individual according to the stated needs of the individual. A theory of the person as preeminent, then, has become the unchallenged rationale of the contemporary American secondary school.

This emphasis tended to ignore a second major purpose of education, service for others and with others. A consideration of the needs of society as well as a consideration of personal needs is important to the concept of democracy. Promotion of the general

welfare requires some commitment to that general welfare. Learning, void of social context, can be incomplete learning. **The Association believes that because of the nature of modern youth and the interdependence of the contemporary world, particular care should be given to developing the social as well as the personal dimension of education. The secondary school program should focus upon the needs of people collectively as well as individually.**

The Nature of Youth

Since 1950 marked changes have occurred in the secondary school population of the United States. Not only has the total number of enrolled students increased almost threefold but the composition of the student body broadened as well.

The public secondary schools enrolled 5,725,000 students in grades 9-12 in 1950. By 1972 this enrollment had grown to 14,092,000 students. At the same time a significantly higher percentage of youth were attending school. In 1950 some 76 students were enrolled in public and private secondary schools for every hundred youth aged 14-17 in the general population. By 1972 a broader group attended so that 93 of every hundred youth aged 14-17 were students.

Enrollment of virtually all youth in the secondary schools has modified the nature of the school population. Schools today serve the low, middle and upper income, all minorities, the gifted and not gifted, the able and disabled. Students with severe skill deficiencies in reading and mathematics now pass into the upper grades. In addition, students with mental retardation and physical handicaps have entered the life of the school. Remedial classes, programs in special education, practical arts courses, and psychological services have been added to the schools' repertoire to serve these students.

A greater change than this, however, has affected youth during the past 25 years. The broader world was moving, and youth with it. Among the more striking changes was the earlier onset of puberty. Since 1950 the menarche has dropped about two-thirds of a year in the United States. In the past 70 years the menarche has fallen two full years. Adolescence, once expected to begin at age 12 or 13, now may come at age 10 or 11. By their sixteenth birthday most youth today achieve a cognitive and physical capability that approximates full adulthood.

The earlier physical maturing of youth has been accompanied by a number of significant social changes as well. These include a diminishing family influence and control, a new interpretation of the constitutional rights of youth, a greater mobility and affluence, a media-nourished awareness of the broader world, and a growing separation of the adult world from youth. The impact of these major trends upon youth is of considerable consequence. A discrete youth subculture has formed, one set apart in many ways from adult life.

The Panel on Youth of the President's Science Advisory Committee identified certain distinctive traits of this youth subculture in a major report entitled *Youth: Transition to Adulthood*, completed in 1973. The characteristics are defined as follows:

(1) An inward look for models and heroes. Youth, as both producers and consumers of their culture, are a self-contained group. Consequently, youth and adults have become increasingly segregated.

(2) A psychic attachment to other youth. As family strength dwindled, youth found emotional support among themselves. A small group closeness developed, replacing "going steady." The family has become peripheral to the social life of many youth.

(3) A drive toward autonomy. In pressing for independence, youth tend to reject adult authority. Admiration goes to youth who successfully challenge adults. The youth media, primarily films and radio talkshows, disseminate and popularize this outlook.

(4) A concern for the underdog. While youth possess a natural idealism, concern for the underdog apparently comes from being an outsider to the mainstream institutions of society, the work organizations. This isolation tends to create a feeling of dependency and segregation, causing resentment.

(5) An interest in change. An outsider has no stake in the *status quo*. Youth seem inclined to stay with their peer age group, planning changes as they grow.

Clearly the secondary school population reflects a new chemistry of life.

The Panel on Youth considers the subculture and its attendant behaviors to be a product of the larger social environment rather than an independent movement of youth. The social circumstances of youth are summarized by the Panel as follows:

> Youth are segregated from adults by the economic and educational institutions created by adults; they are deprived of psychic support from persons of other ages, a psychic support that once came from the family; they are subordinate and powerless in relation to adults; and outsiders to the dominant social institutions. Yet they have money; they have access to a wide range of communications media and control some; and they are relatively large in number.[1]

Schools play a part in this segregation. The thrust in secondary education over the past hundred years has been to keep more students in school for longer periods of time. Meanwhile, child labor laws effectively excluded youth from the labor market. Opportunities in the adult social and business world gradually became closed. As a consequence, youth became thrice segregated—from the working community and from other age groups as well as by social class.[2]

A corollary problem is the lack of authentic work roles that once were a part of the home life of youth. The ability of young people to contribute to family needs has been curtailed by instant foods, automatic dishwashers, gas-jet fireplaces, and similar labor-saving devices. The places that once existed in the neighborhood for youth participation, such as the corner store or block improvement projects, have been diminished by bigness, mobility, anonymity, and job specialization.

The focus in secondary schools over the past generation on better buildings, on modern curricula and on a higher quality teaching staff—all commendable reforms—failed to recognize a larger world which was gradually forcing youth into holding ponds surrounded by abstract, passive, synthetic experiences. Meanwhile new rearing practices allowed youth greater social freedoms while new interpretations of the Constitution provided for broader legal rights. One result of these countering forces has been crisis... in the classroom, in the home, and on the streets.

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[1] *Youth: Transition to Adulthood*, University of Chicago Press, 1973, p. 25.

[2] For an analysis of this development, see *American Youth in the Mid-Seventies*, The National Association of Secondary School Principals, 1971.

According to the National Panel on High Schools and Adolescent Education, commissioned by the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, society has, in the name of universal education, "decoupled the generations." The casual and informal links between youth and adults that in earlier years provided continuity and stabilized values have been broken. As a result, the Panel states, "We have succeeded in producing a youth society housed in an overburdened institution excessively isolated from the reality of the community and adult world."[3]

The Association agrees that youth are being shortchanged by current arrangements. Physically, today's youth mature early. They exhibit an intellectual precocity and social awareness unmatched by previous generations. Yet, they are set aside by society. Most are asked to assume only minor responsibilities. Although fully ready to contribute to the world's work, they are instructed to wait longer than did their parents or grandparents for that day of contribution. As one consequence of the waiting and the isolation, youth retreats to an exotic and ersatz subculture. Society loses their talents and they, in turn, lose the opportunity to mature through the assumption of responsible roles.

The Association believes that the routes available to youth to become adults are insufficient. The artificiality of the present arrangement must be amended by the addition of authentic experiences. The adult world should be recoupled with youth. Youth can, and should, assume more responsibility for the welfare of others. Youth should have the opportunity to work seriously at community aims as well as for individual goals. And youth should have learning opportunities in the practical and specific realm as well as those which are vicarious and theoretical.

Among the pyschosocial characteristics of youth are a full development of abstract thinking and a high cognitive capability, traits served by traditional schooling. But other equally significant attributes of youth are these: (1) a drive for independence, (2) a movement toward mature personality, and (3) an interest in career selection and preparation. Do today's schools provide adequately for the development of this entire range of psychosocial attributes? Do the school curricula allow the fulfillment of these qualities?

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[3]*Report of the National Panel on High Schools and Adolescent Education*, HEW, 1974, Introduction.

The Curriculum

The Association believes that the secondary school curriculum should be redesigned and placed in a more comprehensive setting. Opportunities for service and work, serious contact with adult institutions, and experiences which span age and ethnicity need to be a part of secondary education. Thus would schools become less exclusively cognitive, egoistic, and segregated by age and culture.

The times call for more than the simple addition of a few courses. Rather, a new and different perspective must be brought to bear. Among the pertinent questions to be asked today in making a thoughtful analysis of the secondary school curriculum are these: What total set of experiences makes sense for a healthy transition of contemporary youth from childhood to the adult world? How can society best provide for the full development of youth in an era of specialization and transience? How may the education of youth be benefited by the various institutions of society? What roles do the schools assume in the overall design?

The basic responsibility of the secondary schools within this total context is to instruct students. Even as new understandings develop of the broader needs of youth, the secondary schools must make an honest appraisal of their own limitations to serve all needs of all youth. Where learning, or the planning or sponsorship of learning, is not the central purpose at hand, institutions other than schools should provide the needed services. Schools should not presume to be the singular cocoon of youth; they cannot furnish all services to all youth.

Learning is not confined to the classroom, however. Superior instruction may occur in a variety of settings, both on and off the school campus. As the sponsor and caretaker of the educational needs of youth, schools will necessarily develop a broader definition of education than commonly is applied today. The community as well as the school affords splendid opportunities to learn.

NASSP holds that a full use of these opportunities must become a part of curriculum planning.

Under this concept the school will assume responsibility for pulling together the learning resources of the entire community as well as developing courses for classroom instruction. **The Association believes that the identification and design of learning opportunities in the community must become a new curricular priority for the school, and that the role of the school overall is to orchestrate these opportunities for the education of youth.**

The current tendency to equate education with reading a book or working in a laboratory should be redirected, so that community-based learning is accepted as a partner of classroom-based learning. The purpose of this thrust is not for vocational training or job orientation, although these may be by-products. The purpose of community-based education is to offer youth a wide variety of opportunities to learn in the public world, to test theory with practice, to assume a partnership with adults, to deliver upon responsibilities of consequence, to gain a mutuality with other age and ethnic groups, to participate in solving problems rather than merely talking about solutions to problems, and to gain a deeper understanding of the possibilities and the limitations of society's institutions and of the people they serve.

The opportunities to learn through action and participation will vary. Some students may find value in job situations. Others may prefer volunteer work in social service agencies or special interest organizations. Still others may organize and contract with public or private agencies, through the school, to provide a specific service. For still others, the school itself may provide the opportunity for a responsible role as tutor or recreation leader or aide.

Among the benefits of age integration, youth with adult, is the incidental learning which takes place. In the process of working alongside adults, youth assimilate ideas and information about the broader culture in addition to various job skills. They learn in adult institutions by observation and conversation, as well as by job participation. Adults, in turn, may gain a new appreciation of youth from this partnership.

Students are supportive of community-based education. Studies by ACTION, the federal agency for volunteer youth, by the Panel on Youth of the President's Science Advisory Committee, and by the Gilbert Youth Poll show that approximately 75 percent of

youth today believe that work and service opportunities should be offered during the school day for credit.

Good mental health may be nurtured by such programs. Among the findings of the 1970 Report of the Joint Commission on Mental Health of Children was this comment on the relationship of real work to the affective life.

> Work satisfaction, security and success play important roles in the mental health of our children and youth. Work continues to be a central part of a man's — and increasingly a woman's — sense of personal identity, significance, and status.*

While the Association feels that community-based learning provides a unique opportunity for youth to develop perspective, maturity, and leadership; at the same time, it recognizes the complexities involved. The intended purposes need to be carefully defined. Thoughtful planning and organization are required. The cooperation of the community is essential. Supervisory personnel must be trained. A shift in school resources may become necessary. Legislation will be required in those states which require the physical presence of the student in the school building in order to quality for state aid.

Experience-based education is a complement to, not a replacement for, the more traditional curriculum. For a significant number of students the contemporary secondary school with its many options fulfills most needs for learning. A wise blending of the best of the newer approaches with the best of the proven ones provides the truest assurance of quality education. Wisdom suggests that the curriculum should not be reinvented each year. Schools should feel no guilt about repeating successful programs. Secondary education, for the sake of good practice, must always give proper attention to the center of professional knowledge as well as to the growing edge.

The Association believes that a comprehensive secondary school curriculum will include three general categories of study: (1) Common Learnings, (2) Optional Courses, and (3) Community Programs. Common Learnings include the basic skills and core knowledge required to function in this culture. Optional Courses

*Crises in Child Mental Health: Challenge of the 70's, Report of the Joint Commission on Mental Health of Children, Harper and Row, 1970.

provide students the chance to explore personal interests. Community Programs are opportunities for learning provided beyond the classroom door.

Common Learnings remain the heart of the curriculum. NASSP recognizes that only with some web of mutual understanding and common values can a society function. Without these a society ceases to exist as a society. The main strands of the web for youth in the United States are these:

(1) Communications: the ability to read, write, speak, listen, and interpret,

(2) Quantitative Thought: the ability to use quantitative relationships to solve problems and to select correct operations, including operations using decimals and percentage.

(3) American Civilization: an understanding of the history and culture of this nation, of the values and processes of democratic governance, and of interrelationships with the peoples and resources of the planet.

In addition, until completion of grade eight all students should explore on a consistent basis these areas: (a) Natural Science, (b) Practical Arts, (c) Fine Arts, (d) Body Function and Nutrition, (e) Physical Education. The extent to which one or more of these subjects would be required at the senior high school level should be determined state by state and community by community, as goals are developed and priorities identified. As was previously stated, the Association considers the development of goals and priorities for secondary education to be a central responsibility of the secondary schools reflecting their position as a prominent integrative institution in a divergent society. Care and priority must be given to this planning function.

At early adolescence opportunity should also be provided in the curriculum for values clarification. Caught in a highly transient and inconsistent world, youth faces the problem of overchoice. They find themselves constantly bombarded with conflicting opinions and options. Yet, students seldom are encouraged to reflect upon their own values or those of friends. They are not expected to search out or to discuss candidly contradictions which may exist in their own value systems. While secondary schools should not impose a rigid set of values upon students, at the same

time students need the experience of defining themselves and the direction of their lives more clearly. **The Association believes, therefore, that schools should design opportunities for students to consider their own value systems so as to clarify personal convictions and, whenever possible, to reconcile value conflicts.** This process will equip the student to face the succession of complex choices that will likely mark the future.

Two other dimensions of the Common Learnings curriculum are highly significant. Their presence in the life of youth is important. **The Association believes that multicultural understandings should be reflected throughout the curriculum. They should be interwoven with a number of subject areas, to include English, social science, science, and the fine and practical arts.**

The cultural roots of the United States are extraordinary, coming from Europe, Africa, Asia, and the Americas. They constitute a richness of resource unparalleled in other nations of the world. Whether in music or military campaigns, in literature or scientific inventions, the contributions of all these peoples together form the complete story of the nation. This story endows youth with a unique heritage, one that when understood is appreciated. These understandings should grow, course by course and year by year.

A well articulated and integrated curriculum in multicultural/multiracial understanding should be part of every student's education irrespective of the composition of the community. Schools that enroll significant numbers of a particular ethnic minority should expand the units that are devoted to the contributions of that ethnic group. This approach not only enhances the education of the majority student, it also adds to the sense of pride and identity of the minority student.

The Association believes that serious attention also should be given to career awareness and career preparation, and that their presence is appropriate to most subject areas. While some of the current deficiencies in career education will be ameliorated by a closer integration of school and community, full benefit will be gained only by preparation for such experiences. Work is potent. No society can survive without work. Most people spend a lifetime at work and identify to a considerable degree with their chosen careers. Schools, therefore, have the responsibility to develop programs of career awareness and career training that will acquaint students with a variety of work values and roles.

The relationship of occupations to courses taught should be a part of the total effort.

The NASSP does not equate "Common Learnings" with identical courses. A series of alternative courses or programs, for instance, can be offered within the general framework of Common Learnings. Furthermore, the Association is persuaded that Common Learnings should not be required at the twelfth grade level except for those students showing a serious deficiency.

Finally, the importance of Common Learnings must be emphasized. The three R's are not a quaint frill or an academic artifact. They are necessities for personal fulfillment, for economic livelihood and for citizenship. The illiterate can be a burden to themselves as well as to society. In similar vein a familiarity with democratic precepts, the identification of personal values, an awareness of careers, and appreciation of cultural diversity are all requirements for effective living throughout the United States.

Optional Courses, the second major category of curriculum, allow students to pursue personal interests. As students advance through the secondary schools, they should be encouraged to build upon interests, to gain depth in areas that they elect to pursue. In an age of increasing specialization, students who exhibit a particular talent or aptitude should be allowed the opportunity of an educational apprenticeship in their interest field. They should move forward as far and fast as talent and enthusiasm dictate. A quarter or semester elective system will enhance the choices available to such students. Similarly it will benefit students who desire to explore in breadth rather than in depth.

Among the options available should be interdisciplinary courses and alternative programs. Electives should not be confined to single courses. Rather, a common theme, a common interest, or a common need may bring subschools of students together to mutual advantage within the total campus. Small schools-within-schools can operate successfully alongside the mainstream program in the typical comprehensive secondary school. The essential pedagogical elements of this approach are twofold. They include (1) a unifying theme and (2) a smaller and more intimate size. Recognition is growing that the larger secondary school designed during an era of community and family stability may, during times of high mobility and transience, cause feelings of isolation and anonymity among youth.

One corrective initiative can be for the student to join a smaller subgroup at school for recognition and support.

Experience suggests that comprehensive options, commonly called alternatives, should not be divorced entirely from the mainstream of the school. The life of most alternative off-campus schools has been short, averaging about two years. Alternative programs within schools, however, have been considerably more successful. All educational options, including those called alternative programs, should allow students the opportunity to elect from the regular curriculum as well as to be part of a special curriculum.

A third general area of the curriculum, Community Programs, offers important opportunities for learning. As secondary schools begin to rely upon the broad educational resources of the total community instead of upon the confined resources of the school campus, new doors will open for youth.

Work-study and work-experience programs are seeing steady growth. Volunteer and public service work is gaining acceptance. Internships, apprenticeships, assistantships, and similar approaches to integrating students with adult organizations are beginning to enrich the learning environment for youth. All community enterprises should be enlisted to develop these broader opportunities for learning. Governmental agencies, hospitals, political organizations, volunteer service organizations, research firms, and retail outlets are but a few of the locations where adults are finding a place for secondary school students. Community advisory committees are most helpful for identifying learning stations and for gathering community support for these programs.

As the community reassumes some degree of responsibility to educate youth, so in turn will the school begin to assume a new responsibility for organizing the total range of educational opportunities available to youth. Schools offer the most natural base for such a program. School personnel can draw together the appropriate elements. They can catalyze for youth the learning resources of the entire community.

While this organizing function could be assumed by other public agencies, the more sensible approach is for schools to lead this effort. Historically, the efforts of non-school agencies to educate youth have been expensive and short-lived. Also, community

learning experiences should be integrated with the evaluation and credit systems of the school. This can best be achieved with school leadership.

The Association believes that secondary schools should identify and organize the learning resources of the community as well as those of the campus. Toward this end the schools should begin to place a new focus upon total instructional design so that the best options are available for learning within this broad context. This designing function includes a more thoughtful attention to the nature, needs, and learning styles of students as well. It provides, also, for a student to join the planning team whose task it is to identify and bring about a particular learning environment for that student.

In sum, schools are the appropriate agency for diagnosing the learning needs of students, for locating and managing the total resource pool available to serve those needs, and for initiating, organizing, supervising and evaluating all appropriate educational experiences for students on campus and in the community. Using a mix of school and community resources, the school should orchestrate this broader educational enterprise of design, delivery, and evaluation. This expanded function will be in contrast to the traditional role of the school as a dispenser of education in the classroom.

An attendant benefit gained from learning in a community setting is growth in academic skills. Often students who have experienced difficulty with reading or writing in a classroom setting show significant growth when job requirements include the use of such skills. Also, acting as a tutor of younger students may benefit the development of reading skills as well as enhance the growth of maturity and responsibility in youth.

Community Programs may extend beyond the immediate locale. Various field experiences, work camps, restoration projects, rural-urban student exchanges, sister school residencies, foreign study tours, archeological digs, and environmental projects all offer valuable dimensions to learning. They, also, should be available in the school's storehouse of learning opportunities.

The secondary school curriculum should be expanded vertically into college level courses, as well as horizontally into the community. In recent years, as youth have become more mature and

independent, the twelfth grade has developed into a year of transition for students. No longer exclusively a capstone for high school, it is becoming a bridge to the next phase of life.

The twelfth year of school becomes more attractive to students when limitations are lifted from the opportunity to do advanced academic work. **The Association believes that in the spirit of offering extended educational opportunities for youth, college courses should be provided on the high school campus. These courses would preferably be taught during the school day by qualified secondary school teachers appointed as adjunct professors by cooperating institutions of higher education, and would utilize college syllabi.** When such arrangements cannot be made, students should be allowed class enrollment on the college campus while still attending high school. These opportunities should be available to all serious students rather than to a small elite. Students may receive college credit for successful completion of these courses.

Attitudes in youth evolve from a number of sources: the family, the neighborhood, the media, travel, religion, and peer outlook. Schools, as well, make contributions to attitude development in youth. By linking thinking with feeling, by organizing to accommodate individual needs, by discussing the consequences of alternative actions, by considering many viewpoints, by offering encouragement and support, by assigning responsibility and giving trust, and by adult example, the schools weave the affective strand into student consciousness. Secondary schools reflect the values they consider important; they teach by example. This example is part of the curriculum.

The Synchronous Curriculum

Youth are being taught and have been taught by the many curricula of society. These curricula begin with the family and continue onward to the latest and most popular song lyric or television program. The collective impact upon students, always substantial, has grown with the media revolution. The curriculum of youth ranges far beyond the school.

The home background plays a central role. National studies and international studies repeatedly show verbal competence to be primarily a product of the family. The three most important variables relating to reading comprehension in students are reading resources in the home, socio-economic status, and parental interest and encouragement to read. Even among students that are 15 years of age, the home background accounts for variations greater than do school characteristics.

But youth meet many educators in addition to the school and home: film makers, magazine publishers, disc jockeys, librarians, advertising directors, marketing specialists, religious figures, camp directors, sports celebrities, television script writers, tour directors, and political leaders. All are teachers of children and youth. All have their own curriculum. So do toy companies, cosmetics firms, clothing manufacturers, and soft drink bottlers. All strike the educational network of the secondary school student.

American society is in the midst of a media revolution with opportunities for education and miseducation inevitable in everyone's daily life. **The Association acknowledges the pervasive impact of the media and of the marketplace upon the educational networks of youth. The Association believes that given these circumstances certain new responsibilities fall upon the school. These include the development in youth of an awareness of the other curricula, of an ability to analyze and criticize them, and of**

a framework of personal values with which to read the various configurations.

One dimension of the synchronous curriculum is of particular concern to the NASSP. Student crime and vandalism may well be related to an emphasis in the entertainment world upon violence. A committee ofthe Surgeon General of the United States has determined that the causal relationship between televised violence and anti-social behavior is sufficient to warrant appropriate and immediate remedial action.

Since the acting out of youth could well be related to inputs at a younger age, and since it is estimated that by age 12 the typical child has witnessed 10,000 acts of violence on television, **the Association believes that television entertainment programs displaying specific acts of violence should be reduced significantly by regulation of the Federal Communications Commission. The NASSP, in addition, urges the allocation of new funds by the Department of Health, Education and Welfare to conduct further research on the relationship of youth crime to media programing.**

A corollary problem for schools is the contradiction between what students learn in the public media, on the one hand, about issues such as drugs or nutrition or premarital sex or status and consumption and what it is that schools are expected to teach in the classroom. While school and society are in agreement on certain values, strong contradictions exist in regard to others, resulting in confusion for youth. Society and schools continue to place youth in the middle on such issues, and schools have only limited impact upon the attitudes of youth under these circumstances.

The education of youth embraces the whole society. Youth are influenced by the total culture. The reform of education, therefore, cannot be confined to classrooms and schools. Rather, it involves numerous institutions: families, neighborhoods, the media, the professions, business and labor, volunteer organizations, pressure groups, and the legislatures. Public education, broadly interpreted, mirrors the public community.

Organizing for Instruction

The decade of the 1960s brought a period of unprecedented activity to the secondary schools because the purposes of the nation had become clearly identified with improved schools. A broad consensus emerged that, given sufficient attention, ideas, and money, schools could achieve new levels of effectiveness.

Sparked by foundation monies and spearheaded by NASSP's Commission for the Experimental Utilization of the Staff, a strong assault was launched against routine and lockstep approaches to instruction. These pioneering efforts soon developed into a popular and widespread campaign to incorporate flexibility into teaching and staff organization.

The experimental mood of the profession together with unusually strong public support and growing government grants converged to allow innovation along many fronts. The nation sought educational excellence and believed in making changes to achieve this excellence. The effort encompassed a reform of subject content, particularly in the sciences and mathematics, as well as experimentation with methodology and school organization.

Among the more prominent new organizational and methodological elements of the era were team teaching, differentiated staffing, flexible grouping, modular scheduling, independent study, programed instruction, dial access information retrieval, television and other mediated displays, together with a new focus on the laboratory and library as centers for inquiry. While the particular forms of some experiments have been tried and found wanting, the substance of their message has been incorporated into the mainstream of the American secondary school. The growth of resource centers, the employment of clerks and aides, the application of technology, the opportunity for independent study options, the development of learning packages, the formation of teaching teams, the acceptance of variety in scheduling patterns,

and the widespread use of student seminar groups attest to the effect of the reform movement in the 1960s. Schools generally have been reorganized to improve teaching and learning.

The Association believes that, on balance, the reforms of recent years have made valuable contributions to secondary education. They should be continued. A new flexibility and attention to individualization has entered the secondary schools. Students have become more involved with the learning process. Teachers have broadened their repertoire of instruction. Learning has moved away from the single textbook to a multitude of resources. Content has been significantly updated. Facilities have dramatically improved.

The innovations of the 1960s, when profiled with traditional approaches, allow a significant perspective on the nature of the student and on the conditions for learning. The experience of the past 15 years provides these insights about teaching secondary school students:

(1) Programs for the individualization of instruction may include or may exclude independent study. The two terms are not synonymous. A truly individualized program reflects the nature and learning style of each student. An approach that requires all students to study independently is as monolithic as a system which allows no students to study independently.

(2) Student typologies range from independent learners to dependent learners. Maturity, not ability, defines an independdent learner. A dependent learner requires considerable structure and adult guidance to succeed in school. An independent learner on the other hand may perform better with only limited direction. Alternative approaches to learning should be available for the full spectrum of independent and dependent students.

(3) Students tend to lose a sense of identity in large schools unless arrangements are made for some kind of subdivision so as to provide for a feeling of community among the smaller group. These subschools may be organized along common student interests as was indicated on page 23, or by other plans to include interdisciplinary teams, counseling clusters, or direct administrative subdivision. The units should be sufficiently small to allow students and teachers to know one another.

(4) Additional care needs to be directed toward identifying and diagnosing the particular needs and aspirations of individual students. Determining the objectives and learning styles of students should be the initial phase of student program planning with students an active partner in the process, so that what the school expects the student to do and what the student does become synonymous.

(5) Research generally indicates that student achievement at the secondary school level is related to these factors: (a) family background of students, (b) level of education of teachers, (c) verbal ability of teachers, (d) length of school year. Student achievement appears not to be related to television or to other technological means of instruction, nor to various plans of grade level organization. The research on class size is contradictory. Schools should consider these factors when seeking to improve achievement.

Compulsory Education

The Association believes that each state should provide free public education to youth to the age of majority or until requirements for the high school diploma are completed. The term, "free public education," must gain a new and broad interpretation, however. Free public education should be redefined to include all educational programs organized and sponsored by the school both on campus and in the community. It should encompass all learning opportunities and options for youth which lead youth constructively toward legal adulthood, now age 18.

The phrase, "or until requirements for the high school diploma are completed," will apply to adults of age 18 or over, as well as to youth. Persons who do not qualify for graduation upon reaching legal adulthood at age 18 should be allowed and encouraged to pursue the diploma at public expense until the diploma is achieved, regardless of age.*

The term, "compulsory education," then, assumes a dual meaning. First, it becomes compulsory upon youth to be involved with a structured program of learning under the guidance of the school, utilizing those series of educational settings appropriate to each student. This requirement extends until the diploma is earned or until the last day of the seventeenth year, whichever may come first. Second, it becomes compulsory upon society to provide adequate opportunities for learning for adults as well as for youth until the high school diploma is earned. All youth without diplomas, upon reaching legal adulthood at the eighteenth birthday, have the option of "leaving school" (i.e., leaving behind the sponsorship and direction of the secondary school as the institution in society responsible for the education of youth). They also

*While some states have maintained the age of majority at 21, or have reduced it to only 19 for some purposes, most states have reduced the age of majority to 18, following the 26th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which granted the right to vote at age 18.

have the option of returning to "school" for assistance to complete the diploma as interest dictates.

NASSP takes these positions on compulsory education for the following reasons:

(1) Society has an obligation to provide adequately for the transition of all youth to adulthood.

(2) Society logically would not require citizens to be educated beyond the age of majority, now established at age 18.

(3) Society should not drop youth unprepared into a *laissez faire* world prior to youth reaching the age of majority or until the high school diploma is achieved, qualifying youth as prepared to enter adult society.

(4) The gap between the age that some youth currently leave the classroom and the age at which they become employable is a void of apathy, delinquency, wasted talent, and public indifference. While this period may not be a time of schooling for all youth, it should be a time of education for all youth.

(5) A number of opportunities can be developed by society to educate youth beyond the traditional and narrow confines of the school campus. Secondary schools are the institutions best able to sponsor youth under a broader concept of education, cooperating with public and private agencies to locate appropriate learning stations, including job opportunities, for students.

(6) All youth can be moving along some productive route to adulthood. None should be in the backwash, biding time and waiting for something to happen sometime. Rather, schools should assume the initiative to locate appropriate situations for the learning and growth of all students. Special situations may be appropriate as early as age 14 or 15 for some students. Public funds should be provided to support youth in their quest to grow and mature by organized means and thus take their place in adult society.

NASSP considers it imperative that a cohesive and comprehensive plan be developed by this society for the education and for the transition of youth, generally. Rather than terminating the

requirement for learning at an earlier age, and leaving behind a debris of uninstructed youth, the Association is convinced that the more constructive route is to propose that society restate broadly its responsibilities toward youth and reform its institutions so as to bring about a delivery of these responsibilities. NASSP has proposed, therefore, the most comprehensive plan yet attempted by this society for youth and their education. The plan, when applied, will bring a new intensity to learning for many youth.

The Association believes that under a comprehensive plan that accommodates the learning needs of youth in these broader ways, one that utilizes with school sponsorship all the resources of the community for education, the term "dropout" becomes obsolete. The student may "stop out" of school but does not drop out of education. The student may phase in and out of full-time class work according to his or her overall program, but learning continues under school sponsorship.

NASSP supports as honorable and often advantageous an entry, exit, and reentry to full-time classroom study for students. As a more comprehensive strategy for education replaces the traditional dependency upon schooling, the utilization of good learning opportunities in the community will become acceptable to youth and their families socially as well as educationally.

Experience in the outside world often provides the motivation for a student to take classroom courses to correct skill deficiencies or to complete the requirements for a diploma. The weaving together of community and school experiences provides for some youth the truest opportunity for perspective, for growth, and for success.

Under these new and broadened provisions for learning, the dropout student becomes only that person not moving in a constructive direction along any educational plan leading toward adulthood. The dropouts collectively would be those few persons so troubled as to be unable or unwilling to learn and grow under any of the arrangements available to the school. Such persons would be, in many ways, literally dropouts from the general society as well as dropouts from the society of learners.

The NASSP realizes that some few youths may not respond to any proposals for learning. At this point the secondary school would have stretched its capacity for educating to the limit. The

school's function in society is to plan and to provide instruction, broadly conceived. The secondary school should not assume a responsibility for those youth who refuse to learn or cooperate even under the wider opportunities of a coordinated school-community effort. For the rehabilitation and therapy of youth, society must turn to other youth-serving agencies whose mission and training will provide appropriate services.

Schools, however, must provide the leadership necessary to assure that the rehabilitative services available to youth are well coordinated, and that referrals from school are appropriate. Where such services are not available for youth, the school should promote their development in the community. The effectiveness of these services is critical to the eventual return of most troubled youth to school and hence toward responsible adulthood.

The American public today is taking a second look at the benefits and problems associated with compulsory education. After years of unquestioning commitment to compulsory education, questions are being raised about the concept. How long should it extend? Does it contain serious deficiencies? What are the alternatives?

Those who advocate terminating secondary education at an earlier age cite several deficiencies, claiming that it (1) retards the development of maturity and prolongs dependency, (2) generates the isolation of youth; (3) fails to recognize the two-year advance in the age of menarche and an accelerated social maturity, (4) disrupts school for the interested students, (5) maintains an outdated senior class year, (6) reinforces a narrow definition of education, (7) limits choices that should constitutionally be open to youth.

Advocates of compulsory education to a later age, on the other hand, point to these benefits, arguing that it (1) protects youth against exploitation, (2) mandates equality of education, (3) promotes an enlightened electorate, (4) protects the labor market, (5) relieves parental responsibilities, (6) develops the potential of the individual.

Any serious proposal to modify compulsory education must accommodate many of the key arguments for and against compulsory education. Implicit in a proposal for change, therefore, is the requirement to bring forth new concepts and broader definitions of education. Thus the question becomes not just a matter of determining the proper age and mode of compulsory

schooling. Rather, the need becomes that of delineating the *ways in which society's responsibility to youth for education are fulfilled*. That is, what total set of experiences and conditions may reasonably be required of youth for the benefit of youth prior to youth's determining these matters for themselves? The recommendations of the NASSP concerning compulsory education address this broader question.

Graduation Requirements

A great diversity exists among the 50 states concerning requirements to graduate from high school. Some states legislate a number of specific courses, to include English, U.S. history, government, mathematics, physical education, consumer education, driver education, and health. In other states the local school district determines all qualifications for graduation, to include course requirements. The most typical situation is for some requirements to be mandated by the state legislature and some by the local school board.

Graduation requirements currently are under extensive review in a number of states. Among the forces acting to bring this review are these: (1) determination of the age of majority as 18 years, (2) extension of the constitutional rights of minors, (3) recognition of the early physical and social maturation of youth, (4) acceptance of the value of community-based education for youth, (5) popularity of alternative paths to learning, (6) revision of entrance requirements to college, (7) modifications in school-college relationships, and (8) advent of new approaches to credit verification.

Among those states actively reviewing and revising graduation requirements, two trends are evident. These include:

(1) An extension of the local option to determine graduation requirements while concurrently reducing state mandates.

(2) The development of performance standards as a requirement for graduation.

Recently revised graduation requirements for some states prescribe only that instruction be *available* to students in a wide variety of subject fields. Specific courses are not legislated for the diploma. Rather, the actual graduation requirements become largely a local mandate. These states set only the general require-

ments that students must receive instruction in values, safety, citizenship, work skills, and the effects of drugs.

A second trend, the applicaton of performance standards, tends to focus upon the development of a series of competencies considered necessary for effective adulthood. Normally, the criteria used to determine the level of competency are left to each local district.

With the earlier maturation and independence of youth, with school-college relations in flux, with course requirements becoming flexible, and with traditional approaches to granting credit under review, it may appear that the high school diploma is obsolete. Perhaps it is mispositioned and should be moved forward in the sequence of education. Perhaps it is a meaningless certificate of attendance and should be abolished. Or perhaps it should be redefined and reinstated as a document of significance.

Society will likely retain some ceremony or certificate to document the passage of youth to adult status. Observation suggests such an event to be far too important to pass unnoticed in human culture, primitive or sophisticated.

The Association believes that graduation from high school serves in American society a number of functions. A diploma provides some assurance to the state that a new generation is equipped to assume the responsibilities of citizenship. The diploma gives parents and friends a sense of pride and progress. It furnishes employers and college officials with an indication of maturity and achievement. It renews the commitment of teachers and administrators. And, for youth, it represents not only a feeling of accomplishment but also it opens the final and most sacred door to adulthood.

Graduation is one of the more significant ceremonies in American society. The diploma, as a symbol, carries cultural as well as economic value. It provides solid evidence of the ideals of a society in action, of a commitment to the development of the individual.

But what should be the intrinsic meaning of the diploma? What should it signify, of itself, about courses and competencies? What mastery of skills and knowledge should it represent?

The Association believes that the criteria for a high school diploma should be distinctive, representing an accomplishment independent of higher education or the world of work. A diploma should not necessarily mean that the holder is prepared for a job.

Nor should it particularly signify that the holder is ready for college. Rather, a diploma signifies that the student is sufficiently prepared to assume the responsibilities of adulthood.

This preparedness should consist of these verified attributes of the graduate:

(1) an ability to read, write, and compute with specified proficiency,

(2) an acquaintanceship with the American experience, to include an understanding of the process and structure of democratic governance,

(3) the successful completion of a series of courses and/or planned experiences, some of which involve a group setting.

A commonality of meaning based upon the three central criteria cited above should be developed. The diploma should become common currency. When this occurs, the value of the diploma will rise because the citizenry will better understand its purpose and its requirements. The minimum requirements for the diploma must be constant within each state, as well, for the diploma to gain general recognition.

The aim of secondary education is to nourish the unique talent of each individual while at the same time developing common attitudes and competencies among persons sufficient for society to function. Some of this common knowledge is academic while other is attitudinal.

Many skills can be measured by tests of competency. Complex behaviors, however, are more difficult to gauge. The determination of educational inputs and the measurement of outputs is still an indefinite science in the affective realm. The documentation of planned experience, therefore, remains a useful measure.

The Association believes that indicators of performance can strengthen the evaluation process but are insufficient by themselves as criteria. They do not constitute a complete picture. Measures of performance need to be paired with verification of significant experience to document a comprehensive approach to education. Among the experiences important to learning is the opportunity to study and work in a group environment. The discussion, the response of others to one's actions, and participation in a collective enterprise all contribute significantly to a social and intellectual preparedness for adulthood.

The world into which youth graduate, that of employers and of institutions of higher education, is looking not alone for cognitive and psychomotor proficiency. This world is also seeking certain social qualities such as maturity, dependability, and the ability to work constructively in a group setting The realm of experience as well as of achievement, then, is important to the value of the high school diploma. The graduate should possess enabling skills that are social as well as personal.

The socialization dimension of education and the experiential dimension of learning necessitate the use of units as well as competencies for credit verification. Passing a written examination on the French horn cannot be equated with playing in a concert band. Studying a book on automobile safety does not assume the ability to drive a car safely. A solo reading of *Macbeth* does not balance participation in a play or discussion on *Macbeth*. The experiential side of learning should be, therefore, one important dimension of the diploma.

The skills and competencies required to qualify for the diploma must be verified by reasonable means. The traditional credit system has the advantage of flexibility, course by course, as well as ease of documentation. Educationally it also accommodates well to individual interests. The disadvantage of the credit system centers around the problem of inconsistent standards. Quality may bear little relationship school by school.

A second approach to verification, that of competency measures, allows for a precise examination of skills. It also has the advantage of requiring careful preparation of the course objectives and of the competencies to be measured. But a system of verification based entirely upon competencies or performance indicators may define performances too narrowly, may not measure complex cognitive behaviors, may overlook affective learning, and can prove restrictive and inflexible in operation.

Taking a series of competency tests may qualify a student for certificates of competency in the areas being tested, should the school decide to issue certificates, but not for a diploma. A diploma signifies a planned sequence of experiences as well as performance under specific circumstances.

The Association believes that qualification for the high school diploma, therefore, should include verification by course and by competency. The use of both approaches strengthens the measure-

ment process and adds authenticity to the diploma. Competency measures should be used to evaluate skill proficiency. Credits should be used to document completion of courses and programs. Together they make the evaluation picture complete.

Questions may arise as to the assessment of experiential or community-based education. Competencies, or credits, or both may be used to verify learning beyond the classroom. Among procedures used successfully to evaluate experiential education are these: (1) performance tests, (2) comprehensive written examinations, (3) assessment centers, (4) ratings, (5) interviews, (6) simulations, and (7) product assessment. The technique selected, of course, will depend upon the nature and objectives of the experience.

The NASSP, then, in summary, sees graduation requirements as reflecting specified content and specified processes, as well as specified approaches to evaluation. **The Association believes the criteria for the high school diploma should be as follows:**

1. **As verified by competency measures;**
   a. **Functional literacy in reading, writing, and speaking,**
   b. **Ability to compute including decimals and percentages,**
   c. **Knowledge of the history and culture of the United States, to include the concepts and processes of democratic governance.**

Functional literacy concerns the performance of tasks representative of adulthood. These tasks include the ability to locate information, to summarize paragraphs, to interpret maps and tables, to follow written instructions, to understand basic manuals (i.e. drivers license), and to verify written information. The competencies are demonstrated within the context of these areas of life: (1) health and safety, (2) careers, (3) personal business, and (4) citizenship.

Ability to compute includes an application of the appropriate operation to problems as well as an understanding of the computational process itself.

Knowledge of the American experience concerns the central political, economic, and social events of the nation as well as an understanding of the precepts of democracy and its processes in action.

The enabling skills in literacy, computation and citizenship required for graduation may be verified according to measures and procedures selected by each school district or by each state.

2. As verified by units or credits;

a. Successful completion of semester units equal to a normal-student course load extending through the first semester of the senior year.

b. Sufficient attendance in courses and programs to gain fully the educational and social benefits of group situations.

The number of units required for graduation should be sufficient to ensure a thorough education, yet not be so large or inflexible as to preclude early graduation should that be the desire of students and their families. It should also allow students who fail two or three courses to graduate with their class.

Attendance in educational settings is an important component of learning for youth. Good attendance benefits youth academically as well as socially. Group learning situations assist students to communicate, to work together, to gain perspectives, and to accept responsibility—all important components of adulthood. Also, good attendance at work is expected and rewarded in the adult world. A habit of consistency, therefore, is a beneficent behavior for youth in the long run.

NASSP is persuaded that exceptions cannot be made to these base line requirements for the diploma. Most graduates, of course, will far exceed these criteria. Other students, those less motivated or talented, will respond admirably when requirements are clearly stated. Still other students will succeed with remedial and tutorial assistance. Perhaps most of all, the broader educational opportunities afforded youth to learn in new ways in the community will intensify the learning experience, and thus instruct youth more effectively than traditional routes.

The Association feels that, given adequate resources, appropriate professional technique, and reasonable student effort, almost all youth will qualify for the diploma. Also, while NASSP is not recommending certificates of competency, either as a supplement or adjunct to the diploma, it feels that any communities desiring an additional documentation of skills may find the certificates useful.

Delivery of Guidance Services

Sponsorship of the learning experiences of youth to age 18 implies the strong and continuous delivery of guidance services to each youth. The delivery of these services must be placed in a new framework, one that includes a more careful diagnosis of the needs of students, the planning of programs jointly with students and families, and the coordination of classroom and off-campus learning experiences.

The increased options available to students under the concept of a broad school-community curriculum will result in a unified educational experience only if students make career, educational, and personal decisions under a well organized arrangement for guidance. **The Association believes that secondary schools must reorganize departments of pupil personnel to make expanded resources and services available to students. The delivery of guidance must involve community as well as school, parent and teacher as well as counselor, and specialist as well as generalist.** Among the specialists required are career advisers, college and financial advisers, job placement specialists, and psychological and group work consultants. A referral service for seriously disruptive youth to appropriate community agencies for rehabilitative work also is required.

As secondary education broadens its program and redefines its relationship with post-secondary education, more focus must be placed upon educational guidance. Educational guidance includes helping students to identify interests, aptitudes, and learning styles, assisting students to plan appropriate educational programs within broad options, working with students to identify goals and select next steps to careers, and phasing students into a worthy post-secondary path.

Unfortunately, counseling services in many schools today fall short of the needs of students. A lack of clear program objectives,

the inordinate amount of time spent on clerical and routine tasks, differing perceptions as to the role of counselors, and the extensive demands of certain students all add to the problem. In addition, a greater priority should be given to the early detection and prevention of problems rather than to the expensive and often ineffectual processes of correction after problems grow.

Recent studies of the role and functions of the guidance counselor document certain shortcomings in current guidance practice. Parents, for instance, tend to see guidance activities in different perspective than do counselors.[5] Given top priority by parents are these functions: (1) selection of a high school course of study (2) selection of and application to college or career, and (3) testing to ascertain interests, aptitudes, and abilities. Counselors, however, tend to rank these services relatively low. Studies also show that counselors exert little influence on student choice of post-secondary education or occupation. Some dissatisfaction and uncertainty is bound to occur when parents, students, counselors, and teachers perceive guidance priorities and activities so differently.

Obviously, the role and function of the counselor is unclear and limited. A school's guidance program should not depend solely upon counselors. The delivery of guidance should be a team effort of the total school. Teachers, administrators, parents, coaches, paraprofessionals, nurses, peers, and community personnel all can assist at appropriate times with the counseling and advising process. All can assist individual students to reach adulthood.

Good communication among teachers, counselors, students, parents, and administrators is one essential for an effective guidance program. The awareness of teachers about courses and options, the involvement of teachers and parents in educational planning, and the advice of citizens in career planning all contribute to student awareness.

The Association is convinced that the delivery of guidance services to students can be improved significantly. Expectations for counselors and other school personnel must be clarified, and the organization of guidance services must be recast and strengthened. Among steps to be taken are these:

[5] *An Evaluation of the Role and Functions of the Guidance Counselor*, Office of Education Performance Review, State of New York, 1974.

1. Involve parents, teachers, students, and counselors in developing objectives and priorities for guidance services and in developing role clarification.
2. Explore alternative methods of delivering guidance services, to include the extensive use of teacher advisers or the assignment of individual counselors to clusters or units of teachers and students.
3. Provide teacher time for sponsorship of off campus experiences including on-site remediation and guidance.
4. Make wider use of students as peer counselors, and of volunteers as career counselors to extend existing staff.
5. Modify the counseling role to be that of resource specialist rather than a generalist for students.
6. Maintain records for each student which clearly indicate career and educational choices taken, decisions made and revised, remedial and enriching experiences offered. Provide paraprofessional time for constant updating of these records. Federal legislation on the availability of records will not reduce the value of those records when parents and students are closely involved in the development of the experiences recorded.

NASSP is convinced that improvement of this area of service to youth is central to a quality secondary school program and requires careful attention.

Student Activities

Student activities are a vital part of secondary education. The opportunities for students to organize and plan, to assume leadership roles, to gain recognition and identity, to experience self-governance, to recreate physically and emotionally, and to mature socially come to a significant degree from the student activities program.

A number of activities once considered "extra" now are offered as courses with credit. In some schools student officers may take a class in leadership and group planning for social studies credit, or student environmentalists may carry out a water quality survey for science credit. This arrangement for credit often applies to other student interests such as journalism, athletics, debate, dramatics, and the yearbook. Whether or not credit is appropriate for a particular activity should be determined by a faculty accreditation committee established to determine criteria for projects and to conduct evaluations of them.

A broadening of the interests of youth is reflected in many activities programs today. Some interest areas formerly considered solely as personal hobbies or community concerns have become a part of school affairs. The list of new clubs grows each year. Among the general categories are these: (1) Recreational (hiking, bicycling, skiing, sailing, etc.), (2) Service (hospital auxiliary, recreational and tutoring aides, etc.), (3) Ethnic (Chicano Students Organization, Black Student Union, Native Indian, Asian American, etc.), (4) Career (medical, business, agriculture, etc.), (5) Special Interest (numismatics, gourmet cooking, terrarium building, etc.), and (6) Subject Related (rocket club, Spanish club, etc.). As a consequence of this growth a large proportion of the student population is becoming involved in activities programs in most schools. The expanded interest has caused the enlistment of adult sponsors from among parents and non-certified staff in some instances.

A corollary movement includes the expansion of youth activities in the community. Students in growing numbers are joining community organizations that focus upon particular interests. Such interests may include speed skating, judo, flying, mountain climbing, rock collecting, civic drives, political planning, or whatever. Holding a job successfully, of course, may also be considered a beneficial "extracurricular" activity.

In areas with families of depressed income, the secondary school and its students can operate as a social services center. Students possess the competencies to assist with a number of human service functions that operate under the community school concept. Such services can include child care, health care, nutritional care, aid to the aged, family assistance, and recreation.

Students should have a stake in the development of school policy. The advice and participation of youth is invaluable to schools in a wide variety of ways, from the determination of community goals and priorities for education to recurrent considerations of electives or student behavior that arise on campus with each school year.

Observers have long argued that the participation of youth in various activities develops talent, maturity, and responsibility. Recent studies substantiate this opinion.[6] The accomplishments of adults are significantly correlated to their "nonacademic" experiences as students in school. Thus, student activities are of extraordinary importance to the later and serious realm of adulthood.

The Association believes the expansion of student activities to be constructive and beneficial to youth. NASSP endorses the broad participation of youth in a variety of activities and athletics as contrasted to their status as simple spectators. Since student activities and athletics play such an important role in the maturation of youth and in their effectiveness as adults, no student in good standing in a school should be denied participation because of scholastic prerequisites. Good standing is interpreted to mean adequate class attendance and satisfactory adherence to school policies to include those on student behavior.

The normal regulations regarding age and years of participation must, of course, be maintained. The intent of the Association is not

[6] *Varieties of Accomplishment after College: Perspectives on the Meaning of Academic Talent*, The American College Testing Program, Iowa City, 1974.

to deregulate athletics and activities. Rather, the intent is to separate academic achievement from participation in athletics and activities.

Student activities should be viewed as a significant force in the total educational program. Opportunities for students to participate should be made available on that basis. Activities should assume a full partnership in the school program rather than be offered only at the sufferance of classroom performance.

School Governance

The governance of schools has become increasingly complex. While local boards of education retain the basic responsibility for governing local schools, their freedom to act has become increasingly constrained by state departments of education, by citizens groups, and by employee organizations. In numerous educational matters ranging from school finance to class load, these groups have a growing impact upon policy decisions of the local school board. The freedom of movement of school boards has been restricted by the courts as well.

The broad involvement of citizens in local government has always been considered important to the democratic process in the United States. This involvement was felt to be the best assurance of good government. Definite guidelines should be followed, however, to assure that citizen involvement does not result in petty conflict, personal aggrandizement, or tangential issues.

The National Association of Secondary School Principals believes that the participation of the community in school governance can be beneficial when appropriate guidelines for participation are employed. These guidelines are:

(1) Citizen advisory groups, to include adult and student participants, are helpful to school districts in the formulation of policy. The identification of goals and priorities, for instance, provides an ideal input for citizen participation.

(2) Citizens' advice can be helpful in the formulation of criteria for the selection of professional personnel. The actual selection, appointment, and evaluation of personnel, however, should be managed by the professional staff.

(3) Boards of education, within the powers granted by their respective states, must retain the right of final decision. A board of education is the *one* responsible body to whom the professional staff must look for governance.

(4) The policies governing a school district should be clearly stated. Such statements are particularly important in times of opinion flux and counteracting demands. A policy umbrella protects the professional staff from the whipsaw issues of the particular moment. It also provides a necessary direction for staff effort.

(5) Advisory committees composed of parents, students, and teachers, when reflecting a spectrum of background and interests, can be helpful to the individual school. The identification and resolution of local problems in partnership with school administrators and the formulation of recommendations to the principal are appropriate functions for local advisory groups. It is critical, however, that local committees understand their role to be advisory rather than governmental.

(6) School principals, as the persons responsible for implementing policy at the operational level, should always be consulted on the formulation of district policies which will affect school programs and operations.

(7) The decision to initiate a particular program or approach, or to implement a procedure within a school is reserved for the building principal or his supervisor. The principal assumes responsibility for the operation of a school and thus must assume final authority as well. The directing and supervising of decisions is an administrative function, not a community or group function.

School management on a day-by-day basis is the responsibility of the school principal and immediate assistants. The principalship entails important and significant leadership responsibilities as well. **The Association believes that a principal must do more than organize and administer resources, make decisions, and evaluate school productivity. The principal must also initiate the consideration of new goals, implement promising new professional practices, and organize programs of inservice education for staff. Principals are spokespersons and public symbols for their schools as well. The qualities exhibited by the principal as a person and as a professional have a significant impact upon the character of the school.** An energetic, communicative and emotionally stable prin-

cipal can be a positive catalyst for students, staff, and parents. In summary, the leadership role of the principal is crucial to the quality of the school.

Increasingly, principals must plan for the futures of their schools. The constant renewal of staff in times of constant change is an important leadership responsibility of the principalship. Keeping faculty and students aware of contemporary issues affecting education, and exposing the school to new practices and procedures, can revitalize the staff and renew the capability and spirit of the school. The secondary school should be a place to grow for adults as well as for students.

Proper school governance provides for due process and the right of appeal. All administrative decisions should be subject to the appeal process without prejudice. The principal's authority is a legal authority and therefore subject to legal procedures.

Finally, the school principal is a public official, responsible for implementing state policy regarding education. As a public official, the functions and responsibilities of the principalship should be defined by legislative mandate.

Articulation with Post-Secondary Education

The relationship between secondary and post-secondary education is changing. While high schools and higher education developed in America as relatively separate systems, a new emphasis on cooperation currently is emerging. The marriage is pragmatic as well as philosophical. Secondary school students are seeking expanded opportunities for learning while at the same time post-secondary education faces a dropping student enrollment.

Past efforts at effective articulation have often proved to be inadequate, causing unnecessary expense to student and society alike. But the long standing need for an effective continuum of learning is now becoming fulfilled by public demand for a system of lifelong learning free of discontinuity. Sharp breaks in arrangements for formal education are giving way to a fluidity of movement from one educational level to another.

Meanwhile, new degrees of complexity are entering the situation. These include the popularity of part-time study, a growing adult clientele, the diverse nature of pre-collegiate experience, the advent of open admissions, and the growth of proprietary schools. While some 2,900 collegiate institutions served more than nine million students in 1972, an additional 7,000 noncollegiate technical, vocational, business, and correspondence schools served approximately 1.6 million students during that same year. Clearly the universe of post-secondary education needs some order. The wide variety of institutional choices for students together with the desire of students to stop in and stop out of schooling requires the development of strong cooperative relationships among educational institutions, and between schools and the job market.

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The sensible and timely transition of youth from secondary to post-secondary status requires a consideration of some important factors. These include:

- A considerable overlap occurs between the curriculum of the last two years of high school and the first two years of college. Studies indicate that nearly one-third of the subject matter content of the freshman and sophomore year of college is merely a repetition of high school content. This duplication should be trimmed through the cooperative and joint action of secondary schools and colleges.
- A growing number of youth are graduating early from secondary school. Some 60 percent of American high schools in 1974 allowed students to graduate before their class. This suggests the importance of flexibility in college admissions practice.
- College admissions requirements are changing. Many large state universities now limit the courses required for entrance to English and mathematics. Others practice open admissions entirely.
- A significant number of high school students find the senior year to be monotonous and unchallenging. Broad options should be developed for this grade level to include the opportunity to take one or more college courses as has been suggested earlier in this report.
- Alternative courses and programs are growing in popularity among youth. Credit verification for this approach to learning must be cooperatively developed by schools and post-secondary institutions.
- Growing numbers of youth are appearing in college deficient in the basic skills of reading and writing. A common responsibility suggests the need for a coordination of school-college effort concerning remediation as well as graduation requirements. As a starting point, the high school diploma should be required for admission to college.

The Association believes that a number of imaginative programs should be developed by secondary and post-secondary education to assure a smooth flow of students from secondary school

to post-secondary status, some of which are included in this report. Distinctions should be eased so that youth may have the option of being secondary school students or post-secondary students, or both, or part-time students of one or the other institutions. To plan and implement this flow, strong school-college liaison councils should be formed to meet on a regular basis. Secondary schools should initiate the formation of these councils.

Among the areas for the councils to consider are student status, joint counseling, admissions criteria, tutorial programs, the curriculum, and the granting of credit. Practices relating to early and deferred admissions and to crediting policies for experiential learning should be clearly defined. Secondary and post-secondary institutions should together allow without penalty reasonable "stopouts" in a student's program.

Joint school-college liaison councils should also inventory the respective educational resources overall within a community to determine the best approach to coordinating and delivering these resources for the continuous benefit of youth.

The NASSP reiterates its view that youth should enjoy a variety of opportunities to earn college credit while still attending high school. The Advanced Placement Program offers one route to college credit, but other options should be available.

These include:

(1) Instruction on the high school campus by college professors

(2) Appointment of qualified secondary school teachers as adjunct professors to teach college level courses on the high school campus for credit entered on college transcripts

(3) Acceptance of high school students on college campuses for one or more courses.

These options, the Association concludes, should be open to all serious students and not solely to the most talented.

The total educational system should be efficient and effective for youth. Unnecessary duplication and program discontinuity waste precious talents and energy as well as financial resources. A new effort to streamline the system for youth must be a high priority of schools and colleges acting together.

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Conclusion

American society currently is experiencing an era of unprecedented cultural and social change. Few traditions remain unchallenged by new viewpoints. Few institutions are untouched by the relentless force of change.

During preceding generations, American secondary schools were restructured and transformed according to the requirements of society. Viewed historically, the secondary schools have proved to be reasonably flexible institutions. Today schools once again face a test of their alertness. They must identify the larger forces at work in society and then redesign secondary education in adequate response to these challenges.

Within a diverse and individualistic society, schools are one of the few institutions to reflect the shared commitments of the people. Schools are a common ground. Reflecting the transcendent values of the people, they must encompass basic and shared commitments if they are to provide for all youth of all the people to learn and live and work together.

The NASSP is confident that the secondary schools of today can respond to these new challenges. Secondary schools can function as integrative, cornerstone institutions for society while at the same time assuming new forms as required by society. Schools can provide a common ground for youth while concurrently extending capabilities for the increasing individual needs of youth. What is required are thoughtful definitions of the needs of the individual and of the imperatives of society together with a new and broader framework for the education of youth.

This report has offered suggestions for action. It recommends attention to goals. It describes the changed nature of youth and the implications for society of that change. It recommends recasting the curriculum in an enlarged mold, while at the same time maintaining a core of common learnings for all youth. It acknowl-

edges the influence and the opportunities of the curriculum of the community.

The report also indicates promising approaches to organizing for instruction and for the delivery of guidance services. If affirms the belief of the NASSP in compulsory education, broadly interpreted, up to the age of majority or until the high school diploma is achieved. It also affirms the central responsibility of the secondary school to design and deliver education to youth in many contexts, campus and community. At the same time, limitations on the responsibilities of schools to rehabilitate youth are defined. Schools are society's primary instrument for instructing youth, but a supportive institution, only, for the treatment of maladjustment to society.

The report, in addition, recommends specific criteria for the high school diploma and for the evaluation of these criteria. It also suggests avenues to improving articulation with post-secondary education and encourages more effective governance of school systems. Finally, the report identifies the crucial leadership role exercised by the principal in schools.

By design, the report focuses upon the student and upon the educational setting. Those aspects of secondary education not directly related to learning and to the educational program were omitted. The Association preferred to emphasize in some depth this central dimension of secondary schools rather than to develop a broad review of all aspects of secondary education.

The NASSP believes that this report contains recommendations for the improvement of secondary education worthy of serious consideration by schools and their communities. The recommendations reflect practical directions to pursue, directions which respond to the realities of cultural change as well as to the realities of tradition and of school operation.

The thoughtful application of this report can once again align secondary schools with their clientele in a strong and wholesome partnership. This partnership will reach beyond traditional definitions of schooling to extensive, exciting new opportunities for youth to learn and to mature. As youth seek adulthood these new opportunities will benefit their intellectual and social growth in ways too long ignored by the larger society. In turn, society will be benefited by its rediscovery that a youth in pace with society is a responsible, contributing person.

The National Association of Secondary School Principals

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